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Disarmament Commission
239th meeting
Friday, 7 July 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Zarif ..... (Islamic Republic of Iran)

The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Reports by Chairmen of Working Groups

The Chairman: We are approaching the final stage of the 2000 substantive session, and will proceed to the adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on the various agenda items, and to the consideration and adoption of the draft report of the Commission, as contained in documents A/CN.10/2000/CRP.2, CRP.3 and CRP.4. Those documents have been circulated in all languages, except for A/CN.10/2000/CRP.3 of 5 July, which is available in English only. We shall then hear concluding statements from delegations.

Before turning to those documents, may I inform the members of the Commission that in the course of the work of the Working Groups, the Group of Western European and other States and the Group of Eastern European States nominated Vice-Chairmen for the two Groups: the representative of Luxembourg and the representative of Armenia. They have been cooperating with us in the Bureau, and I am thankful to them.

I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament", Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana, to introduce the report of the Working Group, which is contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.3.

Mr. Osei (Ghana), Chairman of Working Group I: I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor and the opportunity to introduce the report of Working Group I, which considered agenda item 4, entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament". Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would first like to thank the other members of the Commission for the confidence they placed in me by appointing me. I would also like to thank them for the support and cooperation they showed in the five meetings we held as we charted what, at the beginning, seemed like uncertain waters.

As reflected in the report of the Working Group, contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.3, we did indeed hold five meetings between 28 June and 6 July. And I also had the distinct pleasure of conducting a number of informal consultations. After two meetings, I saw the need for a paper to guide the discussions. As a result of further consultations and hints from members of the Working Group, I presented a working paper. That paper, document A/CN.10/2000/WG.I/WP.1 of 5 July 2000, embodied a structure and elements that we felt could contribute to our consideration of ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament.

At our final meeting, on Thursday, 6 July, we had the opportunity to consider our draft report. The reason the draft report of the Working Group is available in English only is that, as a courtesy to the Group, it was important that the amendments introduced by respective members in English only should be reflected as they were introduced. I am glad to observe that the report has been endorsed as a reflection of what really took place, apart from minor changes and typographical errors and omissions.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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This then is our report. I would also like to say that the Chairman's working paper was issued entirely on my sole responsibility and does not represent a negotiated position or any consensus whatever. I underscore these points so that delegations can leave this room relaxed and without any sense of having committed themselves to anything unexpected. This was the Chairman's initiative, and I felt it would be my humble contribution to help us sustain the momentum that we have gained on disarmament and to provide a basis for further work in our meetings next year and thereafter.

Having said this, let me also take this opportunity to thank all those, other than members of delegations, who have worked tirelessly in the background, particularly the Secretariat staff, the interpreters and the other conference staff — notably the documents officers and the conference officers, who were quite prompt and smart in the distribution of all relevant materials as, and when, available.

I would simply like to end by saying that the lot of the Chairman is at times a very uncomfortable one. Chairpersons undergo the same stress as the proverbial Ghanaian monkey whose sweating as it runs away from danger often goes unnoticed because its abundant hair acts as camouflage. But the joy of it all is that, at the end of the day, those who make your life difficult are the first to come and say that you have done a good job. I am grateful for the honour of having chaired the Working Group.

The Chairman: I thank the Chairman of Working Group I for his report, and for his efforts in guiding the work of the Working Group on nuclear disarmament. We are all thankful to him for the good work he has done.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I, as contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.3.

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: We now turn to the report of Working Group II on agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", as contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.4.

I call on the Chairperson of Working Group II, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina), Chairperson of Working Group II (spoke in Spanish): I have the honour to introduce the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.4.

The Working Group held six meetings, during which we had an interesting and illuminating exchange of views.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your advice. I would also like to thank representatives for their constant support, as well as their friendship and spirit of cooperation. I thank Mr. Kamal and Mr. Chang for their contributions, as well as Mr. Alasaniya and Mrs. Shestakova. I would also like to thank the interpreters and the conference officers, who facilitated our work.

At the beginning of the work of Working Group II, I said that I was convinced that gratitude is better expressed in deeds than in words. I committed myself to work with the Group with determination and enthusiasm. I believe that I certainly did work with determination and with enthusiasm. I also said in my statement, Mr. Chairman, that I was counting on your cooperation. And today, I am also counting on your confidence. When we dived into the pool, the water seemed very chilly indeed, but today I think we are ready to swim. Let us all continue our work.

The Chairman: I thank the Chairperson of Working Group II for her excellent leadership of the group, her integrity and her patience, as well as for her introduction of the group's excellent report to the Commission.

As no delegation wishes to comment on the report of the Working Group on agenda item 5, contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.4, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt that report?

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: Now that the reports of the two Working Groups have been adopted, let me once again, on behalf of the members of the Commission, express appreciation to the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups for their excellent work in guiding the discussions on two important issues. This is the first year of our consideration of those items, and I believe that over the next two years we will make even greater use of the contributions that were made by numerous

delegations, as well as by the Chairpersons, to these discussions.

Let us now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.2.

I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Samuel Amehou of Benin, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mr. Amehou (Benin), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: It is my honour and my distinct pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.2. The draft report consists of four chapters: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the 2000 substantive session", "Documentation" and "Conclusions and recommendations".

Turning to the text of the draft report, let me draw the attention of delegations to paragraph 8. In the process of putting together the final text, a sentence was inadvertently dropped. That paragraph should read as follows:

> "At its first meeting, on 26 June, the Commission heard the statements of Mr. Javad Zarif, Chairman of the Commission, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala."

A number of delegations have made oral amendments to the draft report, as follows.

In paragraph 7, the text "and associated countries" should be inserted following "the European Union".

In paragraph 17, the text "Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Turkey" should be inserted following "the European Union".

In paragraph 24, the text "submitted by Portugal and France on behalf of" should be inserted before "the European Union and associated countries".

The text of paragraph 27 should read as follows:

> "At the same meeting, the Commission adopted, as a whole, its report to be presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session".

As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part consists of the reports of the two Working Groups that have just been adopted by the Commission and that form part of the present draft report. That part is a reflection of compromises and agreements reached by delegations through delicate negotiations carried out in a spirit of positive cooperation. It also represents the best possible achievement under the time pressures, which were unusually severe this year. Since this was the first year that the Working Groups did not hold parallel meetings, I was privileged to be able to watch closely both Chairpersons and delegations skilfully and patiently crafting a consensus on two of the most complex issues on the modern disarmament agenda. The reports of the two Working Groups, together with other documents, although not perfect or fully satisfactory to everybody, will serve as a good basis for further discussion.

On agenda item 4, "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament", I can say that it is a welcome occurrence that the first dialogue on this complex issue, right after the successful conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference, took place within the framework of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission's deliberative mandate allows practical and action-oriented considerations as well as broad philosophical and conceptual approaches to the issue, without its being under negotiating pressure.

On agenda item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", a valiant effort to reach a consensus was undertaken by the Chairperson and Member States. Despite remaining differences, most of which are rooted in national security concerns, it was still possible to find a compromise that kept the momentum alive and transmitted to the official session of the Disarmament Commission the ideas and proposals put forward during the session intact, almost in their entirety. The fact that nothing was lost and that all of the positive achievements of this session will become part of the official deliberations is a commendable achievement in itself.

I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as Rapporteur of this session, and in particular to work under the able leadership of our Chairman, Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy

Foreign Minister of Iran. It was a pleasure and an enriching experience to participate in the work of the Bureau together with the Vice-Chairmen and the two Chairmen of the Working Groups, who provided effective and expert guidance to the deliberations of the subsidiary bodies.

Finally, allow me to extend my gratitude to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that he provided to the Bureau and to Member States. Let me also express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance, especially to Mr. Timur Alasaniya, Secretary of the Commission, the secretaries of the Working Groups, and to the members of the Disarmament Commission staff assisting the deliberations.

With these brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report as contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.2.

The Chairman: May I now draw the attention of representatives to the draft report of the Commission, contained in document A/CN.10/2000/CRP.2. I invite delegations to consider the draft report chapter by chapter.

Since there are no comments on chapter I, "Introduction", paragraphs 1 and 2, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter II, "Organization and work of the 2000 substantive session", paragraphs 3 to 12, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 3 to 12, as orally amended, were adopted.

The Chairman: In chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 17 and 24 have been orally amended in the English text and 16 and 20 in the Spanish text.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. Alasaniya (Secretary of the Commission): I would like to ask delegations to take note of the following announcement. The paper submitted by the delegation of India, which is contained in document A/CN.10/2000/WG.I/CRP.3, was not meant for publication and should not have been circulated. Obviously, it was an oversight on the part of the Secretariat, for which we apologize.

I wish also to make sure that for practical purposes, as a result of this mistake, this paper does not exist.

My second announcement is that yesterday the delegation of France, on behalf of the European Union, requested that certain documents which appeared previously under the CRP symbol be reissued as working papers. I wish to inform delegations that those documents are available. There are three documents, each a corrigendum on a CRP document, stating that the CRP documents issued on 5 July 2000 should bear the symbol of working paper — WP — and be numbered 5, 6 and 7 accordingly.

Because of this change, these working papers will appear later in all languages. I believe they will be available by the end of next week. Delegations that wish to obtain them can contact the Secretariat, and I will be happy to provide them with copies.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 13 to 25, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 13 to 25, as orally amended, were adopted.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter IV, "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 26 and 27, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 26 and 27, as orally amended, were adopted.

The Chairman: Having adopted all paragraphs of the report, the Commission will now take up the draft report as a whole. May I take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of the Disarmament Commission as a whole, as orally amended?

The draft report, as orally amended, was adopted.

Concluding statements

Mr. Osei (Ghana): Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you for allowing me to take the floor once again. I am doing so because I feel the need to put on record, and I believe I speak also for my colleague Gabriela

Martinic, the deep sense of appreciation for the assistance given to us by members of the Secretariat in our work as Chairpersons.

I give these thanks not only collectively but also individually. I extend this sense of appreciation to Timur Alasaniya, Tatyana Shestakova, Mika Murakami, Lidija Komatina, Saijin Zhang, Sergei Cherniavsky, Nazir Kamal and Cheryl Stoute. If I have omitted any names, it is entirely my fault and not out of a lack of recognition for the work that they have done. I thank them very much on my own behalf and on behalf of my fellow Chairperson.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your very wise guidance. It is not by accident that as a young man you are greying so rapidly. But this is a reflection of wisdom, as we read in the book of Proverbs.

Mr. Méndez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the countries of the Latin American and the Caribbean, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, at the conclusion of the 2000 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We also would like to thank the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana, and Mrs. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, for the determination and dedication they have shown in conducting the important and complex tasks that were assigned to those groups.

We hope that the work done in Working Groups I and II will allow the Commission's discussions to move forward on the two substantive items on our agenda — that is, ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Finally, we thank the Secretariat staff for their cooperation and assistance, and we thank the interpreters, the translators, and the conference officers.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me on behalf of my delegation to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the competence with which you have guided the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

I also would like to thank and congratulate the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups. I thank the representative of Ghana for the manner and brio with which he guided the work of Working Group I. The results he achieved are significant and make us optimistic for the future of our work.

As regards Working Group II, allow me to pay tribute to Mrs. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina for her efforts, and for her perseverance, tenacity and integrity. We never doubted her integrity. She is an expert in the field of disarmament with whom we have worked extensively. We greatly appreciated her talents, and we greatly appreciated the competence with which she guided the work of the Group. The intensive consultations we conducted for many hours yesterday are a clear indication of the interest of all delegations in this issue. They also indicated — and all of us here should say something about this — that this is an item that covers issues that are very hard to define. Perhaps we have not been able to reach an understanding on a final document, but this is an evolving and very painstaking process. The at times animated discussion allowed us to pinpoint areas in which further efforts will be required to bring views closer together. But all delegations showed good will to bring together their views — which, in our opinion, are not really as far apart as they seem. The work has begun; the process of reflection is under way. Let us all work as partners in identifying what is indeed relevant to the topic. Let us avoid what may divide us.

The time factor has not always been our ally during this session. It seems that we will have to return to the previous timetable of three weeks and a day. We are all in the same global swimming pool, as Gabriela Martinic was saying. The water is cold, but we are all engaged in a competition, and not just taking a pleasurable dip. We are dealing with important issues, issues that involve national defence. These are questions that have to be very precisely defined, questions on which we will have to all work together as partners, following the principles and rules that guide us here in the United Nations.

Once again, Sir, I thank you and the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups for your patience throughout the long days of our working sessions. I also thank all those who worked behind the scenes, especially your assistant, Hamid Baeidi Nejad, who was always present, who always tried to build bridges among groups and to reach satisfactory results.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having so brilliantly chaired the 2000 session, and for your

efforts with respect to the two Working Groups. Certainly your presence has given a special cast to the work of the Disarmament Commission, which was furthered by your competence and experience. We hope your presence will be felt again in forthcoming sessions of the Commission.

Allow me also to thank the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups Mr. Yaw Odei Osei and Mrs. Gabriela Martinic, for their efforts in guiding the work of the groups. Those efforts make us feel confident and optimistic about the future of the Commission's work. We also would like to thank all those in the Secretariat who worked to promote the success of the Commission's work at this session.

Mr. Brunet (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and warmly thanking you for the determination, the patience and even the serenity, with which you have conducted the debate. Here I am thinking in particular of the difficult preliminary negotiations that we had on the agenda. Our New York colleagues in particular know what I am talking about, but you too have felt — in the struggles of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — how difficult the situation was. At the time many thought the situation really did not augur well for the Disarmament Commission and that there was little to look forward to.

Yet, thanks to your patience and determination, Sir, we have been able to make progress in our work on our agenda. For the work we have accomplished in the last two weeks, I also wish to thank the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic and Mr. Yaw Odei Osei, who have done impressive work. As other speakers have noted, the positions of delegations were frequently very far apart on sensitive issues. Nonetheless, they both succeeded in guiding the debate. We know how difficult it is to debate subjects that have already been deliberated at length in other forums and which are very important and sensitive for many delegations. The role of the chairpersons of the Commission and of its Working Groups is very important in this respect, and enables the debate to move ahead. And a debate did indeed take place. As noted, this is an evolutionary process, and we have two years ahead of us. But we are certain that on this good basis we will be able to move ahead.

I would like to thank the Secretariat and all others who contributed: all those who work behind the scenes supporting the Chairman, the Chairpersons of the Working Groups, and the Secretariat — the translators, interpreters, and all the staff members who contributed to the success of the session.

I wish to add, on behalf of the European Union, that some have said we did not have a debate solely on the agenda items, but also on the length and exact date of our session. Some thought that the European Union had balked at postponing the session to July, because July is the time to think about vacations. But clearly, the European Union was here, and was very active. So a July session posed no problems for us. We will also be here next year.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): On behalf of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement, including those which have already thanked you, Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to thank you and the rest of the Iranian delegation for your leadership, both during the formal meetings of the Commission and during the informal consultations prior to the start of the Commission's work. It is a particular pleasure for us to see a member of the Non-Aligned Movement chair our work.

Allow me also to thank the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups for their diligent efforts to guide our deliberations on the two substantive agenda items under consideration. Their determination and enthusiasm in guiding our work in the Working Groups were commendable, especially given the limited time we gave them to prepare for the session. Our appreciation also extends to the Rapporteur and to the other members of the Bureau.

I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and the Conference Services staff. I would particularly like to thank the Secretary of the Commission, and the secretaries and the Working Groups and their staffs for their reliable advice and assistance during our work. Finally, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the translators and interpreters, without whom we would not have been able to conduct our work.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are approaching the end of this session of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation wishes to sincerely thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the brilliant way in which you have guided the work of the Commission. We would

also like to thank all the members of the Secretariat staff for their efforts and their support for our work.

We also wish to thank the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, our colleagues from Ghana and Argentina, for their efforts, their active work and their successful conduct of the work of the Working Groups.

This session of the Commission has put us on the road which we will travel over the next two years. I am referring to the ideas expressed on the two substantive items under consideration. This session has given rise to considerable optimism about the possibility of converging viewpoints and making progress in our work.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): For the sake of brevity, I would like to associate my delegation completely with the views expressed by the representative of Algeria. However, at the same time, I cannot surrender entirely to Algeria the opportunity to thank you personally, Mr. Chairman, for the excellent manner in which you have steered the work of the Disarmament Commission. The fact that you decided to chair the Disarmament Commission at a time when the prospects for an agreement on its agenda look bleak is reflective of your country's and your own commitment to disarmament.

At a personal level, having met you in Islamabad and having seen you work and perform in the various meetings of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, it is indeed an honour for me to have been able to work under you. I thank you, for all your good work. Through you, I would also like to extend my delegation's thanks to the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, the members of the Bureau, the Rapporteur and the members of the Secretariat staff for all the excellent work they have done.

The Chairman: We have come to the end of our work. I will spare members a statement, but let me thank them very much for the spirit of cooperation and flexibility with which they have participated in the work of the Commission throughout our informal consultations, as well as in the course of the last two weeks. I want to thank members for their cooperation with the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, and I want to thank the Chairpersons themselves again for their very good work in leading the discussions on difficult items in the two Working Groups.

I particularly want to express my appreciation to the members of the Bureau, the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission, for their cooperation and assistance, particularly during the time of my absence, in allowing the Commission to work smoothly. I am grateful to them and to all members.

Let me also join other speakers in expressing on behalf of the Commission and on my own account our appreciation to Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to his colleagues and assistants, who have participated with interest in the work of our Commission and have provided us with counsel and good work.

Let me also express my appreciation to the Secretary of the Commission, to his assistants, to the secretaries of the two Working Groups, as well as to the staff members of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the staff of the Department of Disarmament Affairs and other members of the Secretariat who have assisted us in conducting our affairs.

Let me pay a special tribute and offer thanks to our interpreters, who have stayed with us during our long and arduous work, particularly last night, when they stayed with us until late, and to our friends the conference officers and documents officers. I am grateful to them all.

Closure of the session

The Chairman: I declare closed the 2000 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.